

## THE SUBURBAN CITIZEN.

WASHINGTON, - D. C.

The deadly tacob marriage has again claimed two victims. This time in Jacksonville, Ill.

A wealthy Englishman has left a legacy of a quarter of a million dollars to each of his two daughters, burdened with the condition that they do not marry Americans. He ought to be ashamed of himself after all the heirs of the United States has furnished England.

So much litter and dust are left behind on London Bridge by the tramp over it of 200,000 pedestrians and the rattle over it of 20,000 vehicles daily, that three or four carts are required to carry off the fine debris from leather soles and iron tires. By the incessant traffic, it is said, twenty-five cubic yards of granite are each year reduced to powder. This affords a striking illustration of the wear and tear, the attrition and grind, incident to human life in general.

It is said that a bomb weighing about seventy pounds explodes into a shower of 1200 pieces. A good many arguments have been shot off in the course of the intellectual battles of the ages which have soon burst into even a greater number of undistinguishable fragments. Some hits have undoubtedly been made by these flying splinters of thought, and yet proportionately to the total discharge of theories, the execution accomplished has been astonishingly limited.

Science corroborates common sense in declaring that the short skirts are more healthful than the long. Experience has taught all women that they are more comfortable and cleaner. Most women realize that they are more becoming. Yet the Texas and Connecticut authorities are foolish to waste time trying to induce women to wear them. No woman worthy of the name will do that unless they are fashionable, and then nothing could prevent her from doing it.

The Spanish chart of the Cuban coast has been found to be utterly unreliable, and a complete geodetical survey of the waters surrounding the island will soon be undertaken by the United States Navy Department. On the chart now in use the Isle of Pines is represented as being seven miles from its true location, and other errors equally surprising make the navigation of the Cuban coast without a competent pilot exceedingly precarious. It will take about three years to complete the proposed resurvey.

The different countries of Europe hold different ideas as to the age when responsibility begins and a person can be regarded as knowing the meaning of his actions. In England the law looks upon everyone over the age of seven as a responsible being, and every child beyond that age can be prosecuted as a criminal. The same age is accepted in Russia and Portugal. In France and Belgium the age is eight; in Italy and Spain it is nine; Norway, Greece, Austria, Denmark and Holland decline to prosecute a child under ten, and this is the rule in some of the Swiss cantons.

A careful survey by experts from the Department of Agriculture of the hurricane-swept section of Eastern Texas shows that the farmers lost 1,000,000 bushels of corn, 300,000 bushels of rice, 68,000 bales of cotton, 2,500,000 pounds of pecans, 3000 trees, and farm animals worth \$450,000.—In all an irreparable property loss representing a value of \$3,400,000. The damage thus sustained will be lightened by no percentage of insurance and no dole of charity. In Texas, as elsewhere, the tiller of the soil takes the buffets or favors of fortune as they come, and trusts to benignant nature for future redress and compensation.

A correspondent of the London Times—H. Seymour Trower, writing by order of the Executive Committee of the Navy League—declares that this is a critical moment in the history of Great Britain, because for the time being she has lost command of the sea. For the first time since 1814, he says, a coalition of foreign powers could dispute with England the control of the ocean highways, and do it with a chance of success. The British Admiralty, he declares, has not ordered the building of enough ships, and it has dangerously delayed the completion and equipment of those laid down, while other nations have been actively carrying on the work of naval construction and a new and resolute claimant for sea power—Germany—has arisen.

## CHINA'S OPIUM FARMER.

HAS SOLE CONTROL OF ALL THE DOPE AT HONG KONG.

An Anomalous Position That Lasts But One Year and Makes Its Holder Rich—The Big Dinner With Which He Retires From Office.

In the colony of Hong Kong there is a Chinaman who, while his brief reign lasts, is spoken of by the quarter of a million of his fellow countrymen on the island with bated breath, says the Chicago Times-Herald. To these Celestials, subjects of Queen Victoria, the Emperor of China is not nearly so great a man as the "opium farmer," and the Queen herself, compared with "his mightiness of the drug," is in their eyes only a far-away sovereign, not half so imposing.

In order to regulate to some extent the importation of opium into Hong Kong and to simplify the collection of duties the British Government several years ago decided to place the whole business in the hands of one man. Realizing, however, the tremendous and arbitrary power that could be wielded by a single individual in such a position, it was also decided that the office should only be held one year, and that no person should be allowed to keep it for more than a single term. So it was announced that the Government was prepared to accept bids for the privilege.

Since that time the selection of an "opium farmer," as he is called, has become an annual event. The highest bid generally ranges from 600,000 to 800,000 taels, according to the prospects of the poppy crop for the year and the condition of the market. The successful applicant is duly gazetted in his position, and he is given the assistance of a fleet of a dozen swift Government customs vessels to protect his interests. He himself employs several junks to guard his business against smugglers, but he must only use these boats for the purpose of obtaining information. If he secures knowledge of smuggling operations he turns it over to the authorities, who run the malefactors down. Nearly every week in the year there is a smart skirmish between the sampans of the smugglers from the mainland of China, and the revenue cutters. Pretty little battles some of them are, too, and very useful in giving young British middies and junior naval officers their first taste of sea fighting.

The opium farmer has the sole control of every pound of the drug brought into Hong Kong, and he generally makes from \$250,000 to \$300,000 clear profit in his year of office. The Government gets much more from him than it could secure if it attempted to collect the sum without the enormous amount of trouble and the large force of officers that would otherwise be necessary. The opium farmer's salaried men watch all incoming boats, and as it is a case of Chinaman against Chinaman very little of the raw material gets past him.

At the end of his term of office he gives a great dinner to Government officials, newspaper men and the leading Chinese merchants of the colony. This dinner is one of the three great events of the Hong Kong year. The other two are the polo championship games and the sham battle between the troops in the garrison. As a matter of fact, though natural pride keeps them from openly acknowledging it, the white people of Hong Kong look on this unique dinner as by far the most interesting affair in the social calendar.

When a Chinaman makes up his mind to do a thing handsomely he generally goes to the limit. The opium farmer always makes his dinner, which is a sort of farewell to his brief reign of opium of the opium smokers, something to be remembered by his white friends. Indeed, he lays aside a large sum of money, from \$20,000 to \$25,000, for the banquet, and always reckons it as a legitimate item of expense when he figures up his bid to the Government at the beginning of the year.

A week before the close of his term of office the farmer sends out his invitations. These are always verbal, delivered to the lucky recipient by a shroff, a polite native clerk, who comes to your door with a smile and a bow, clad in a long blue gown reaching to his heels, and tells you that his master desires the honor of your presence at the Wong Tai Lo Restaurant "to modestly sup with him from a little dish or two in token of your good will."

The invitation needs no response. The shroff takes it for granted that you would postpone a trip to Europe to get to that dinner, and he is right. There are no vacant seats when the ceremonies begin.

The Wong Tai Lo Restaurant, where all these affairs are given, is the Chinese Delmonico's of Hong Kong. It stands in the heart of the native quarter, a five-story frame building, elaborately carved, with broad balconies laden with flowering plants and creepers and the usual huge feast lanterns swaying in the wind.

You are met at the ground floor entrance of the restaurant by one of the farmer's representatives clad in gorgeous silks, who gives your chair or rickshaw coolies directions about the time for their return and shows you upstairs to the great dining room on the third floor. The tables, which run in three parallel lines down the length of the apartment, are bare of everything except the usual silverware, with ivory chopsticks added. The big expanse of white cloth has a peculiarly hospitable and restaurant-like appearance, which, however, does not last very long.

The walls are covered with Chinese flags and Union Jacks twined together, and hanging by the hundred from the

ceiling are gay lanterns of all designs and colors enclosing electric lights. About three hundred guests find seats at places where their names are written on pieces of pasteboard. Round the head of the centre table are the ebony chairs of the host, the Governor of the colony, the Chief Justice, and sometimes the senior naval officer of the port. Here and there among the others diners are wealthy. Chinese merchants, their costumes in startling contrast to the colorless white Eton mess jackets of the rest of the company.

When all are seated the opium farmer enters. He comes in through an alcove door, in a rather stately manner, and smiles at the applause that greets him as he takes his place. A minute later he rises to thank his white friends for their presence at his lowly board and apologizes for "the humble character of the fare" he is about to set before them. Everybody knows what that means. Then he turns to the back of his chair and strikes a gong. Dozens of swift-footed waiters at once appear laden with silver ice buckets filled with champagne, port, sherry, Frontinac and a variety of native wines. A hundred young women follow with trays of wine glasses and tumblers and in a few moments every guest is supplied.

Immediately the affair develops into a feast magnificent enough for an old Roman banquet hall. The women, imported from northern China for the occasion, station themselves behind the chairs of the guests and play stringed instruments, singing an almost continuous accompaniment. Flower girls bearing sweet blossoms of the lily enter and twine garlands across the tables, among chair backs, about the flags and in the long line of lanterns.

The tables are rapidly spread with food and a strange mixture of Oriental and Occidental dishes it is. In addition to roast beef, ham, chicken, turkey and mutton, are dozens of Chinese delicacies, curries of every kind, sharks' fins, jellied eggs, pickled fish, baked hedgehog, spitted rice birds, drawn pelican meat, preserves of all sorts, mangoose, mangostines, paradise fruit and dozens of wonderful Chinese puddings.

When midnight comes and the host, the Governor and the Chief Justice have discreetly retired, the singing, jubilation and toasting begin in earnest. As daybreak approaches the faithful ricksha men who have been kicking their bare heels on the brick roads for several hours, begin to think deep boiling-oil thoughts about the foreign devils inside who are yelling "Annie Rooney," "We Won't Go Home Till Morning," "Auld Lang Syne" and other incantations to their gods.

### Buncoed Out of His Seat.

"In the matter of strategy a woman can get the better of a man every time in minor affairs, at least," said a man who is in business downtown, and who rides home in a West Philadelphia car during the rush hour every evening. "I usually get a seat, for I take the car away down at Fourth street. The other evening I was busily reading my paper when a woman got aboard at Twelfth street. I glanced up slyly, and saw that all the seats were occupied. Hasty as my glance was she caught my eye, and that was my finish.

"Smiling broadly, she came over to where I was sitting and exclaimed: 'Why, how do you do? How are all the folks?' I couldn't place the woman to save my life, but I lifted my hat and replied that we were all well. 'She must be some friend of the family,' I argued with myself, so I folded up my paper and gave her my seat. After she had settled herself comfortably she looked up at me in a queer sort of way and said: 'Really, I must beg your pardon. I took you for Mr. Jones. You look so much like him.' But she had the seat, and she kept it. It was a clear case of bunco."—Philadelphia Record.

### King Leopold as a Sailor.

King Leopold of Belgium is a good sailor and a thorough yachtsman. The king remains on deck during the worst storms, when all the other passengers, officers of the royal household and invited guests seek refuge in their cabins. Lately the king's yacht, the Albertia, had to remain twelve hours at sea to avoid the danger of a lee shore. The sea was so bad that even some members of the crew got sick and discouraged. The king remained on deck and cheered them up. On board his yacht Leopold speaks familiarly in English with all his sailors who are English, for he sails under the British flag. Two footmen and a cook always accompany the king of his cruises.

### "Rotten Row," London.

This celebrated ride and drive is said to have been originally named "Route du Roi," on account of its being the favorite drive of the kings of old, and the name "Rotten Row" is merely the English corruption of the French. However that may be, "Rotten Row" during the summer months presents such a scene as can be found nowhere else in the world. In the afternoon it is crowded with carriages and equestrians. Overlooking this scene and most of the park stands the Alexandra Hotel, which has, the last season, become so favorably known to Americans visiting London.

### A Cycle Funeral.

At Bari, in Calabria, the other day, young Ubaldo Sibillo came a fatal header from his bicycle, and his sorrowing associates, says the Corriere di Napoli, determined that there should be a cyclist funeral, worthy one of the best wheelmen in Southern Italy. To the number of several hundreds, all awheel, they cycled poor Ubaldo to the grave, and behind the coffin, like a fallen warrior's charger, they trundled the dead man's bike.

## Good Roads Notes

### A Canadian's Views.

IN view of the experience of the past wet year in the matter of roads, or rather the want of them, I venture to suggest that this is an opportune time to discuss matters concerning the failure of the old system and the substitution for it of some more efficient method, writes P. J. Collyer, in the Farmer's Advocate, of Canada. For those living from fifteen to twenty miles from the railway, as some of us do, there is no other question concerning our business of such moment.

The statute labor system, copied, I believe, largely from that in force in Ontario, while it may have afforded, in the old days, the only practicable method of filling a mud hole or bridging a creek, has, for reasons well known to your readers, certainly passed its days of usefulness.

The Territorial Government, failing to profit by our experience, a few years ago instituted a statute labor system there, which, while superior to ours in several particulars, has already been found wanting, as may be seen from comments in the local papers, and provision has even been made for the substitution of a cash system when the majority of ratepayers in a district (usually a township, I believe) so desire it.

Most of our progressive municipalities have, I understand, abandoned the old system and now collect varying amounts of cash in lieu thereof, and the results of the change, in some of them at least, have been most gratifying. For instance, the Clerk of Birtle Municipality informs me that in the two years during which they have collected \$2 per quarter-section they have done more work than they did in the previous fourteen under the old regime, and I may state that in our own Municipality (Archie) the admitted value of the improvements done under the old system only reaches six per cent. of the nominal cost.

As to the expenditure of the cash, when it is collected, there is a difference of opinion as to the merits of the "day labor" and "contract" systems. Some uphold the "contract" system, considering that it is not safe and I am sorry to say the fear is sometimes justified to allow reeves and councilors to hire their neighbors; but I have heard of dishonest practices in awarding contracts, through only notifying favored parties. As far as my experience goes (and I must admit it is not great) the "contract" system has not proved a success. Owing to the necessity of hunting scrapers, etc., and the frequent inexperience of the tenderers, who, naturally, do not wish to lose money on the job, the prices paid are frequently very high, \$5, \$6, and even \$8 per day for a man and team being not uncommon rates of pay. On the other hand, day labor for short terms is frequently unsatisfactory, as neither men nor teams are of much use until they become acquainted with the work, which was a frequent cause of failure under the old system even when the men were willing to work, and the tool and inspection troubles were ever present. As a solution of the problem, I would suggest the following plan, which, as far as I am aware, is untried, but would, I think, overcome the difficulty without any great outlay in initial cost: Select a well-principled, hard-working man as working foreman, with or without a team as the number of men to work under his direction would be small or great. He should, preferably, have a prior knowledge of the work, which should be previously laid out by a surveyor if the municipal authorities are incapable of doing it, and he should be paid a good salary, placed under bonds, and hired for as long a season as is considered advisable. Then all residents desiring to work on the roads should be required to give notice, by a given date, of the length of time they wish to work on the roads and the date and locality in which they would prefer to put in the time; those selected would work under the direction of the foreman, who in turn would be under the general supervision of the reeve and councillor of the ward. This plan would necessitate but little loss of time through moving, as the townships could be taken in rotation and the outfit would only need to be moved when the money allotted had been expended. It would probably effect a saving in wages, as cost of living would be less if a caboose was provided, which besides affording accommodation for the men, would also contain small tools, horse feed, etc. As regards stonework for culverts, etc., it would perhaps be advisable to have that done by a qualified stone mason, as the dry stone walls and poplar stringers so frequently built last but a short time, and frequently fall shortly after erection, through unskilled workmanship. As cement is now procurable at \$3 per barrel, and even less in quantities, it would, I think, be advisable to have all walls over two feet in height laid in cement mortar, with flanking walls, at least on the upper side, to prevent the earth being washed out behind the stonework.

### A Considerate Wife.

"The most considerate wife I ever heard of," said the Cornfed Philosopher, "was a woman who used to date all her letters a week or so ahead, to allow her husband time to mail them."—Indianapolis Press.

### The Girl to Freeze On To.

Whenever you see a girl at a party that none of the men are talking to you can generally bet she knows how to bake good bread.—New York Press

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